

Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee

April 22, 2013 Minutes from the Opportunity Fund Public Hearing

Committee: Dave Boyd, Bill Brosseau, Dennis Canty, Donna Hartmann-Miller, Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, Shanon Kearney, Jourdan Keith, Sharon Lee, Ross Maddalena, Joyce Pisananont, Dorsol Plants, Pete Spalding, Alec Stephens

Staff: Rick Nishi, Susan Golub, Chip Nevins, Michael Shiosaki

The April 22 meeting was a public hearing on the Levy Oversight Committee's preliminary recommendations for the Opportunity Fund. The meeting was held at the Miller Community Center.

Opportunity Fund Public Testimony

Robert Stevens – Garfield Super Block: The Garfield Super Block proposal is requesting funds for bricks and mortar. There are unsafe areas on the block, plus the path fills with water when it rains. Please reconsider the preliminary recommendation not to fund this project; it is part of the Garfield Master Plan and needs City support.

Cameron Justam – Cheasty Greenspace: Ms. Justam is a member of the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace. She is against the proposal to put a mountain bike trail in the Greenspace. The proposal was never presented to the Friends of Cheasty group, an organization which has worked with Parks since the 1980's to preserve Cheasty. Cheasty is not an unused area – it is a wildlife habitat, not a bike playground.

Mike Kent – Melrose Promenade: There are great views from Melrose. This project provides an opportunity to for a public amenity. There is strong community support from many organizations and individuals. There have been three community visioning meetings that were very well attended. Now the community is ready to implement the vision with play equipment and barbecue/picnic facilities.

Tim Motzer – Lake City Skatepark: Thank you for reconsidering the funding for the Lake city Skatepark. The project will accomplish important objectives:

- The Citywide Skatepark Plan identifies Lake City as a location for a skatepark;
- The project revitalizes Virgil Pflame Park which is isolated and has negative activities going on;
- The project provides activities for youth which is needed in Lake City;
- It meets an on-going need of an underserved community with high concentrations of low income people.

Susan Casey – Magnolia Manor Park: The Opportunity fund project funds the missing piece of Magnolia Manor Park. 150 people have signed a petition in support of the project that will finish the Park. The connection the project will provide is important as it will bring flow and connectivity to the block. Specifically the project relocates the Seattle Public Utility fences to open up the two parts of the Park and adds a path and benches.

Norah Kates – Pratt Fine Arts Center: Ms. Kates has been involved at Pratt for 28 years and is currently a member of the Pratt Board. Pratt is located in a Parks building and has a strong relationship with the department. The lease agreement defines responsibilities between Parks and Pratt with the City responsible for the building structure and Pratt responsible for areas within the building. The project received the second highest score from staff and was recommended for funding. Therefore, Pratt was surprised that the committee is recommending eliminating all funding for Pratt. The project will ensure a safe building for the 13,000 users per year and provide a longer, useful life for the building.

Chris Rogers – Pratt Fine Arts Center: Mr. Rogers is working with Pratt to develop a new campus plan and has been working with City departments as well on this project. The Studio Building reinforcing walls are not reinforced – they are vulnerable to collapse. The building is in need of a full seismic upgrade. The \$750,000 requested is minimal compared to the \$5.5 million that would be required if you had to replace the building. The project was the second highest as scored by staff; please reconsider funding for the project.

Jenny Pohlman – Pratt Fine Arts Center: Ms. Pohlman is a teacher and long-time volunteer at Pratt. Please reinstate funding for the project. Similar to other Parks buildings, Pratt provides a learning environment for amateurs and professionals. There is a concern about the safety of users. The project is a wise investment and meets the evaluation criteria. Please reconsider the Committee's recommendation.

Ed Kronenberger – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Kronenberger is against the Cheasty bike trail proposal. Mountain bike trails destroy the environment. There already is lots of erosion in the Greenspace – Cheasty is a delicate environment that needs to be protected. The bike trail will damage the Greenspace.

Pat Morton – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Morton lives on Cheasty and is concerned about the destruction of wildlife that will occur with a bike trail. The neighbors commissioned the Cheasty Vegetation Management Plan and the bike trail proposal is in conflict with that plan.

Kathy Colombo – Cheasty Greenspace: Keep Cheasty natural. Ms. Colombo is active with the neighborhood group, the Friends of Cheasty, and works with the group to maintain the historic boulevard and restore the natural area and trails. She is opposed to the bike trail because there is a basic philosophical difference between the bike trail proposal and the natural area designation of Cheasty. The trail construction, use and cars bringing people to the trail will disrupt the habitat. Jose Rizal could be an alternate location for a bike trail.

Justin Hellier – Cheasty Greenspace: Thank you to the committee for their hard work. Invasives are choking out the trees in Cheasty and the habitat is dying. Plus there is lots of illegal activity. Without restoration and engagement of community members in the area there will be more illegal users. Friends of Cheasty Mountain View has transformed part of the area – we are good stewards and can continue this work in the Cheasty Greenspace.

Robert Gandy – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Gandy is a teacher who brings low income youth to natural areas for the kids to experience the forest and wilderness. Cheasty Greenspace is an amazing place, but people are afraid to enter because, as the kids say “of the crazy people living in the woods.” We are missing an opportunity to open the area to youth who would be able to ride bikes or walk to a natural area.

Ann McCurdy – Washington Park Playground: The neighborhood needs the new playground at Washington Park as there are no amenities in the Madison Valley. The project has lots of support and there are lots of families with children in the neighborhood who would use the playground. The project provides great bang for the buck as there already is parking, a comfort station and picnic area – the playground complements the existing features at the Park. Plus all of Seattle would benefit because there is high use of the Arboretum and sportsfields, so people from throughout the city would use the playground.

Vince Hommes – Melrose Promenade: The Melrose Promenade project could be a very attractive amenity for the community. Now it is not so great. Please support this project.

Barbara Bicknell – Seattle Sensory Garden: Ms. Bicknell works with handicapped people and these people can’t access gardens and nature. The proposal is well thought out and has high community support, including from the Lions Club, Phinney Neighborhood Association, the Woodland Park Zoo, plus others. Currently there is a small demonstration garden and the proposal is to complete the Garden to the full 1.3 acres. It will be maintained by volunteers. It is a safe and accessible site – please reconsider the recommendation.

Dee Dunbar – Lewis Park Natural Area: The design for the Lewis Park Natural Area has been developed with high community support. The project will provide a better gateway to the Park and will develop a south entry with ADA access. Please keep the project on the recommendation list. The community is very excited and committed to the Park.

Katie Shea – Broadway Hill Park: The community is very excited that this project is being considered for funding. There is very high community support. The Friends of Broadway Hill Park formed in 2010 and have been matching a Small and Simple Grant with thousands of volunteer hours and have done their own fundraising. There is a strong showing of support for the project at this meeting.

Kevin Hillman – Lake City Skatepark: Thank you to the Committee for supporting the Lake City Skatepark. The demographics of Lake City show that in all five census tracts of the

neighborhood there are very high concentrations of families with children and low income families with children. There are lots of youth in the Northeast, but no youth activities. The community center in Lake City is not Parks-run and doesn't have any youth programs. There are many youth at risk and growing gang activity. The skatepark project starts to provide activities for you and has broad support in the community, including the Lake City Neighborhood Alliance.

Steve Malok – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Malok is involved with Bike Works, an organization promoting bicycling for youth in South Seattle. The South Seattle youth need the opportunities that will be provided with a bike trail in the Cheasty Greenspace.

David Miller – Walkable Maple Leaf: There was a scoring issue with the original Parks staff scoring. Now the project has been re-scored, but it was never scored correctly and should be seriously reconsidered. The sidewalks and path lights of the project were a top request from the community during the community process to design the park. Plus the paths will decrease areas for mowing and maintenance and there will be community agreements for the maintenance and operations of the Park.

Tom Vial – Cheasty Greenspace: The Cheasty Greenspace is impenetrable and only used for illegal activities. He is very excited by the idea for an alternative use, especially with complementary use/activation by Bike Works. There has been lots of volunteer work committed to the project – over 20,000 hours.

Johnny Hartsfield – Cheasty Greenspace: At the Cheasty Greenspace there is no safe access to the natural areas and the forest is dying and full of invasives and illegal activities. Public safety is an issue. Access to nature is good for mental health. The proponents of the bike trail project have fixed up the adjacent open space.

Paul Fairbairn – Cheasty Greenspace: The Cheasty Greenspace is inaccessible. Mr. Fairbairn lives at Rainier Vista and the kids there don't have access to woods or nature. These kids won't travel long distances to get into nature. It is important to inspire a new generation to steward nature. Use the bike park as a way to get people, especially children, into nature.

Jeff Heft – Broadway Hill Park: Thank you to the Committee for adding this project to the list. Open space is a necessity for densely populated areas; it is not a desire, but a need. The plan for the Park has been developed with the community – it will be a living room for most Capitol Hill residents who don't have yards. There is a great vista provided by this small park and the p-patch has a waiting list.

Carolyn Swenson – NW 65th Street Acquisition: Ms. Swenson is the mother of a young child and is in favor of the acquisition at NW 65th St. There is no public green space within the arterial quadrant. The streets are 4 lanes and traffic travels at high speeds, making it difficult to reach open space. Also there is high growth projected for Ballard, and the Crown

Hill/Ballard Plan and the Trust for Public Land Report both identify the area as in need of additional green space. The property is for sale and the owner is offering a lower price if it is bought for open space.

Nicole Bradford – NW 65th Street Acquisition: Please purchase the property at NW 65th Street for open space. There is strong community support for the project: fifty people came to a neighborhood work party and there is a petition in support with lots of signatures. The community is excited by the idea of a park at this location and working towards this goal has helped build community. Groundswell NW also supports the project.

Phoenix Benner – Broadway Hill Park: Mr. Benner lives adjacent to the park and is supportive. The neighborhood supports the maintenance and operations of the park picking up litter and leaves – 70 bags of leaves last fall. The community is very involved and will continue to be so; therefore, there will be minimal maintenance and operations costs for the City.

Chaz Redmond – Camp Long: Camp Long is a unique resource and the main building has recently been improved. The proposal is to renovate and heat the cabins which will allow urban youth to experience the wilderness within the City – something that is long overdue. Renovating the cabins adds two seasons to their use.

Debi Frausto – Lower Kinnear Park: The Folkpark group supporting the Lower Kinnear Park Trail has been meeting with Parks staff and have expanded the scope for the trail. They are asking for full funding. The price of additional work to expand the scope is \$10,000. The group is applying for a Department of Neighborhoods Large Project grant for the additional work.

Elizabeth Dunigan – Threading the Needle: The Threading the Needle project, named after the Native American name for canoe path, will create waterfront connections in an area with a low park to people ratio. There will be natural drainage, native plants and high stormwater retention. The community has met with hundreds of Ballard residents. The waterfront stormwater retention will filtrate pollutants and provide ecological stewardship.

Kathy Pelish – Threading the Needle: Ms. Pelish works with the Salish Sea Trading project, a community supported agricultural food security project, where local products are sold from boats. She supports the Threading the Needle project.

Mark Hulscher – Threading the Needle: The project celebrates the connection to the water and the maritime heritage of the City and neighborhood. Currently there is a big crabbing boat at the end of 24th NW. The project has worked with industrial and business neighbors to make sure the park works for all.

Pamela Alt – Threading the Needle: Ms. Alt loves the commitment in Seattle to green space. The location of the Threading the Needle project is great as it is central to Ballard. Different ages and backgrounds will use the park and can learn about sustainability. There are great people involved in the project – very dedicated and hard working.

Lisa Miller – Cheasty Greenspace: Ms. Miller is the Director of Evergreen Washington, a mountain bike youth program which promotes youth development through mountain biking. Students in the program eat better and make better social choices, and their parents started cycling because of their kids. There are 53 schools involved in Evergreen Washington, but only two are in Seattle because there are no off-road bike trails in the City.

Tom Phillips – Cheasty Greenspace: Mountain biking is a quickly growing sport, but there is nowhere to ride in Seattle – people have to go into King County. There are hundreds of kids riding on County trails and there is no soil erosion, garbage or illegal activity. The Cheasty trail would be a huge success in Seattle. It will get kids active and spill over to adults.

Jose Vasquez – South Park Plaza: Thank you to the Committee for recommending the South Park Plaza project. Finally there will be space to gather for the community and a connection for the retail community to the river. The project engages the neighborhood with the river and the business community strongly supports the project. There will be events to bring people together and to bring more people to South Park.

Andrew Marshall – Sacajawea Upper Playground: The neighborhood has green space for passive recreation but no facilities for active use. This could be the location for active use but there is a desperate need for redevelopment: there is bad asphalt, a fence and an old play structure. The proposal is for a new gateway, a bridge to the other green space and new play equipment. There is strong community support and a \$240,000 matching grant.

Larry Ward – Threading the Needle Mr. Ward is against the Threading the Needle project. He does not want a derelict eyesore at the City street end. There are no letters of support from the Ballard Chamber or the Ballard Neighborhood Council. The project uses valuable parking space which is needed by the shipyard. There was a mini park at this location decades ago. Beavers have chopped down trees and there is no maintenance of the shrubs or the pier – the decking is very bad with big holes. Also there is a Combined Sewer Outflow discharge under the pier.

Rick Russell – Sensory Garden: The Sensory Garden project has great partners, including the Woodland Park Zoo which is donating the space. About 100 years ago the Rose Society and partners created the Rose Garden; the northeast side of the Rose Garden will be the new Sensory Garden. There is support for the project from the Lions Club which has been a longtime supporter of the blind; plus there are partners representing other disabilities.

Joel DeJong – Cheasty Greenspace: The Cheasty bike trail proponents met with Superintendent Williams last week and are excited about the opportunity to work with Parks on this project. A task force has been formed to develop a city-wide bike trail policy that will be presented to the Park Board in June. The project has a \$415,000 volunteer match. It is a multi-phase project – please fund it now to activate the restoration phase and the bike trail can come later.

Maggie Santolla – Melrose Promenade: Ms. Santolla lives adjacent to Bellevue Place Park and has lived in the area for 10-12 years. Melrose is a wasted opportunity – it is not inviting green space. Please turn the space into a real asset for the community. The project has strong volunteer support.

David Ward – General Comments: The Committee recommendations are very different from the staff recommendations. Please let the projects know the criteria breakdown as was done for the staff recommendations so that projects can know how they rated. The staff recommendations used \$8 million but the Committee recommendations are for \$7.2 million. When would the rest be allocated and to what projects?

John Feit – Melrose Promenade: Melrose Promenade is a unique, visionary project for unused green space. There is litter and bad drainage which can be corrected with the project. There is the ability to make this a landmark project with unique and varied experiences and great design potential. It knits together the edge of the neighborhood.

Jeff Busby – Melrose Promenade: Mr. Busby lives on Melrose and sees lots of exiting uses such as running and biking. The project connects to Bellevue Place Park and to the Pike Pine Corridor. It is good for views, but not too safe now. It could be a great space and will stitch together other parks.

Daphne Schneider – Othello Park: Speaking on behalf of the Othello Park Alliance, Ms. Schneider noted the proposed project will ensure and enhance the improvements that were made in phases one and two of the Othello Park improvement plan. Phase three will build community with a central green space near the light rail station that historically has been a scary place. Now there is new development and the Park is more used; it is a draw for the neighborhood. All ethnicities and dozens of languages use Othello Park and there has been lots of community planning for this phase.

Gordon Padelford – Melrose Promenade: The Park is not safe at night. The area is an important north-south corridor, but it is a bottleneck because people don't feel safe using it at night. There are lots of illegal uses now.

Stephen Reilly – South Park Plaza: It is a great opportunity for the City to buy this property for a future plaza. It will provide a gathering space for the community and the opportunity for

recreation. South Park residents' life expectancy is 13 years less than for other Seattle neighborhoods; this is partly a result of the lack of green space in the neighborhood.

Jay Gairson – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Gairson lives in Rainer Vista. The neighborhood wants the bike trail project; it will help the low income people in the neighborhood. The Greenspace is rotting through the “not in my backyard” attitude of the neighbors. The Greenspace needs rehabilitation and re-imagination of the space. The Bike Policy is out of date and will be updated. Please reconsider this project.

Bill Pease – South Park Plaza: Mr. Pease regularly volunteers to weed and clean parks. South Park has a park shortage. The Plaza proposal fits the Opportunity Fund purpose perfectly and will help to improve/reclaim the area. Thank you to the Committee for recommending this project.

James Whitesides – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Whitesides lives in Rainier Vista and would like a walking/riding park near where he lives. The Mountain Biking Alliance has shown that biking doesn't negatively impact the environment – there is no difference between biking and walking as far as impact.

Tom Lande – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Lande lives adjacent to the Greenspace. Well-designed trails have no more impact than hiking trails, and you can have adjacent hiking and biking trails. This project is the ticket to renovation of Cheasty. Mountain biking is a draw for urban youth. Mountain biking is similar to skateparks and a perfect use for an inner city forest.

Grace Bennett – Camp Long: Renovating the cabins at Camp Long will increase opportunities for youth leadership and partnerships with youth groups serving low income youth. The goal is to teach youth leadership and environmental skills. Please fund this infrastructure improvement to allow these youth programs.

Briar Bates – Sensory Garden: Ms. Bates noted she has heard about lots of amazing projects tonight. The Opportunity Fund criteria had no accessibility rating. Safety, access and enjoyment are provided with the Sensory Garden and the project will show others how the disabled experience nature.

Adrian Rasmussen – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Rasmussen has been mountain biking since he gave up his training wheels. He works to fix up and uses Ducey Park in King County for mountain biking. Mountain biking is fun, constructive and a gathering place and restores the forest. He is lucky his parents can take him out of Seattle to experience nature, but it doesn't have to be that way. Bring nature to the City's youth, to those that need it most.

Josh Cohen – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Cohen is a mountain biker. The proposed trail is a win for kids' safety, health and for law enforcement. Right now the Greenspace is only shared with illegal users.

Matthew McBride – Camp Long: Thank you to the Committee for your hard work. There is a need for kids to experience nature. It is most urgent now as nature provides a calming, soothing effect on children and provides a lifetime benefit. When he was five, he spent weekends in Camp Long; it was a great way to forget the problems he was facing. Now he lives next door. Please keep the park accessible for more than just the summer.

Mary Fleck – 48th & Charlestown Acquisition: The neighborhood is underserved by parks and open space – they need a dot on the map! The property at 48th & Charlestown is ready for immediate use. There is crushing new development in West Seattle with lots of high rise apartments and low income housing. The closet park is Schmitz Park Ravine, which is not a place to go and play.

Marvin Gray – Cheasty Greenspace: Mr. Gray is a Rainier Vista resident involved with Seattle Union Gospel Mission and Rainier Vista youth programs. They use road biking in their youth program and want to have mountain biking opportunities as well. Mountain biking would add a nature stewardship and environmental leadership skills to the program. Mr. Gray also supports the South Park Plaza project.

Celeste Gilman – Cheasty Greenspace: Ms. Gilman is a Rainier Vista resident and lived in the country growing up. The forest was a sanctuary; however, the forest in the Cheasty Greenspace is anything but a sanctuary. She was skeptical about the bike trail portion of the proposal. However, the unrestored area is dying, damaged and needs work. As it is still early in the process, obstacles can be overcome.

Susan Zeman – Cheasty Greenspace: Thank you Committee for your time and hard work. She lives on the east slope of Beacon Hill, just south of Cheasty. Right now the space is a wasted opportunity. There are 35 acres full of invasives, rats and the homeless. The Vegetation Management Plan produced 15-20 years ago does not have the support needed to keep up with the degradation of the space.

Kerrie Schurr – Genessee Hill School: Ms. Schurr is a school volunteer. There is a redesign of the school that will accommodate 650 students and will open in a couple of years. Please help the school make the grounds a place for the whole community. The School District can't support what the community needs. The proposal funds a playground for young children from 2-5 years old, a pathway around the field and a native plant garden.

Saadeits Peele – Northwest Native Canoe Center: Thank you for supporting this project that will bring people back to the water. The Canoe Center is for teaching families, for connecting

back to water. The United Indians of All Tribes is supporting the project; the Opportunity Fund will close the funding gap.

Steve Paul – Northwest Native Canoe Center: Mr. Paul is the Vice Chair of United Indians of All Tribes. Thank you to the Committee for your support. Both the Committee and Parks staff recommended full funding of the proposal. There is a contract between the City and UIAT which speaks to the need for water access. UIAT formed in 1971, a time when there was lots of turbulence in the country, at Wounded Knee and at Fort Lawton in Seattle. This year is the 43rd anniversary of the take over at Fort Lawton. A constructive outcome was the development of the Daybreak Star Center at Discovery Park